

Lithgow City Council

Memorandum

To: Mayor and Councillors

CC: Executive Leadership Team

From: Ross Gurney - General Manager

Date: 29 April 2026

Subject: Update – Item 1.6 - Active Regional Communities Participation Grant

Dear Councillors,

Since the report was completed on the Active Regional Communities Grant Application, staff have continued to develop the Council's proposal.

For information to supplement the report to tonight's Ordinary Meeting, below is a more detailed description of the proposal. The proposal is still being finalised and is subject to further modification.

The Lithgow Transition Participation Hub and Pathways Program will deliver over 2,000 participation opportunities over four years, directly increasing access to structured community activities, while activating the Charles Hoskins Memorial Building as a central, accessible 'front door' for community participation, skills development, and transition support.

The project will deliver six integrated components:

1. Facility activation by repurposing a heritage-listed building into a participation hub with training rooms, digital access, and shared partner spaces, leveraging existing infrastructure, including an 80-seat lecture theatre, to maximise utilisation and value for money.
2. Hub operations and access support through the provision of on-site coordination and operation of a community mini-bus to remove geographic barriers for residents in outlying towns, including Wallerawang, Portland and Cullen Bullen.
3. 'WorkReady' employment support by delivering programs covering resume preparation, interview skills, digital literacy, and short credentials matched to local skills shortages. The Regional Australia Institute (2023) shows 68% of employers report difficulty filling roles and there is growing demand for entry-level and skilled workers.
4. Youth diversion and participation programs by delivering structured after-hours and school holiday activities, including STEAM programs and First Nations cultural programs co-designed with local Elders to increase engagement and reduce anti-social behaviour.
5. Health and aged care pathway programs that connect participants to Lithgow's largest employing sector, supporting a community where the median age (43.8 years) exceeds the NSW average and demand for care workers is increasing.

6. Project management and evaluation that tracks participation, engagement, and outcomes. The project will engage approx. 500 participants per year including:
 - 250 young people in diversion, leadership, and skills programs
 - 120 'WorkReady' completions
 - 80 participants in health and aged care pathways
 - 150 transport-assisted participants reflecting barrier removal
 - 100 community participants accessing hub services and 'drop-in' support.

Expected outcomes include increased participation in community activities, improved social and economic engagement, reduced youth disengagement, improved access to employment pathways, and stronger connections between residents, services and local employers.

Ross Gurney
GENERAL MANAGER